

Review

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YĀMUNA'S VEDĀNTA AND PĀÑCARĀTRA — Integrating the Classical and the Popular : by Walter G. Neevel, Jr., Harvard Dissertations in Religion—10, Published by Scholars Press for Harvard Theological Review, Printed in U.S.A. 12345, Printing Department, University of Montana, Missoula Montana 59812.

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This thesis of Walter G. Neevel Jr., termed 'outstanding' as it is, would prove to be a contribution to religion and philosophy which also could be termed 'outstanding.' The literature of the Vaiṣṇavites can be said to be twofold : the first belonging to the Āgamic tradition : Vaikhānasa, Pāñcarātra etc. and the second belonging to the Ācārya tradition of Yāmūnācārya, Rāmānujācārya etc. as also Madhvācārya, Vallabhācārya and others. The first kind helps us in understanding the religion, especially the temple-religion of the Vaiṣṇavas with their internal divisions based mainly on ritual specialities. The second kind on the other hand with academic bias enlightens us on the tenets upheld by these Ācāryas having affiliation of Vedāntic schools and sub-schools. The affiliation of Yāmuna and Rāmānuja (and Vedāntadeśika etc.) is well-known. They have rather expounded, upheld and defended the Pāñcarātra teaching in their own way. The evolution of the Pāñcarātra could be marked by three phases : i) early phase noted in Mokṣadharmaparvan of the *Mahābhārata*; ii) the Āgamic phase evidenced in the classical Pāñcarātra Samhitās :— *Sāttvata-Pauṣkara-Jayākhyā* and *Īśvara-Pārameśvara* and *Pādma* dealing with religio-philosophical topics in the Jñāna-Yoga-Kriyā and Caryā sections ; and iii) Ācārya-phase trying to find this thought a *dārśanic* status in the Vedāntic systems.

It is sometimes feared that the Ācārya phase has strained the original character of the Pāñcarātra thought of the Āgamic phase due to projection of academic scholarship. The research-work of somewhat interdisciplinary nature like the present one is welcome for this reason since it touches both the fields of religion and philosophy. The present author has done well in concentrating his study on Yāmuna and the Pāñcarātra. A critical edition and English translation of *Āgamaprāmāṇya* by M. Narasimhachari and J. A. B. van Buitenen, have been two useful additions to the aid to Yāmuna's studies. The former was not available to Neevel in time so as to make use of it in his thesis.

The book under review consists of two parts – the first consisting of five chapters and the second of three chapters respectively. The first one is entitled ‘The integration of Vedānta and Pāñcarātra within the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition’ and the second is entitled ‘Yāmuna’s Vedānta’. The topics of discussion, however, could be better understood if we go by the chapterwise division instead of the partwise one.

From the Pāñcarātra point of view, we obtain good discussion on Yāmuna’s approach to Pāñcarātra as evidenced in *Ātmasiddhi* and *Āgama-prāmāṇya* in the second chapter named as ‘the relation of the classical Vedānta to the popular Pāñcarātra’, the defence of Pāñcarātra revelation by Yāmuna in the *Āgama-prāmāṇya* in the third chapter and Yāmuna’s Pāñcarātrika Vedānta in the eighth chapter. The introductory chapter (ch. I) contains the background of the Vaiṣṇava tradition and literature, noting the information about dates etc. of the early Vaiṣṇava teachers and the place and role of Yāmuna therein. In the fourth chapter, the author discusses the Vedāntic sources of Yāmuna in the *Āgama-prāmāṇya* taking note of—among other things—the views of G. Oberhammer (*Yāmunamuni’s Interpretation von Brahma Sūtra 2.2.42–45, Eine Untersuchung zur Pāñcarātra-Tradition der Rāmānuja-Schule* 1971). Influence of Nāthamuni on Yāmuna has been dealt with in the fifth chapter (with App. I recording the internal references to Nāthamuni). Chapter VI is devoted to *Ātmasiddhi* analysed in various respects. The VII chapter entitled ‘conclusions of Yāmuna’s Vedānta’ has its special utility inasmuch as it furnishes transliteration and an annotated translation of the introductory section of the *Ātmasiddhi*. The book is appended by an elaborate bibliography of books covering both the fields : religion and philosophy included by the author in his study-programme.

The author, who has laid his stress on the *Āgama-prāmāṇya* and *Ātmasiddhi*, has rightly pointed out that in the *Ātmasiddhi*, Yāmuna self-consciously and explicitly places himself within the classical Vedānta or Uttara-Mīmāṃsā *darśana*; in *Āgama-prāmāṇya* on the other hand he argues for the authority of the Pāñcarātra, assuming a basically defensive posture against some prestigious orthodox opponents who charged that this post-Vedic Tantric tradition is unorthodox, heretic and to be excluded from the Vedic tradition (*Veda-bāhya*) (p. 17). The author further observes that ‘the success of Yāmuna and the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava tradition in general at making such a reconciliation has been perhaps their greatest contribution to the ongoing evolution of Hindu religion, providing a model for the reinvigoration of the ancient classical traditions through the integration of vibrant contemporary movement’ (p. 17). One may differ with the author in respect of some details here and there noted in his thesis, but it is difficult to differ with him about this basic observation. This is one of the valuable part of his contribution to the studies in this field.

The more valuable contribution of this book, however, is in the field of philosophy. The author has gone deep into the sources of Yāmuna's Vedānta and has observed that the Mīśra-tradition of Śrīvatsānka Mīśra was the central or determinative factor influencing Yāmuna (p. 74). The author has been consciously using the terms like Pāñcarātriṇa Vedānta etc. to stress the fact that the *Pāñcarātriṇa Vedānta* could be read as a system of Vedānta if the sources available to us are neatly correlated. It is interesting to note that he has described one of the predecessors of Yāmuna as 'anonymous Pāñcarātriṇa-Naiyāyika' (p. 38). This only goes to show the close acquaintance of the author with the philosophical writings of the Ācārya-tradition and the ease with which he can think along with the thought-givers of the Pāñcarātriṇa-Vedānta. The last chapter of the book could be looked upon for the distinct contribution of W. G. Neevel Jr. in this field. We hope that the author will continue his interest in this field. This dissertation is a welcome addition to Indology even in its present form; it would, however, be more welcome if it comes out in the regular form of a book.

P. P. Apte

SANSKRIT KAVI-SAMĪKṢĀ : by Dr. Amarnath Pandey, Head, Sanskrit Dept., Kashi Vidyapith, Varanasi; Chaukhambha Orientalia, Gokuldas Sanskrit Series No. 25, Gopal Mandir Lane, Varanasi 221001; 1977; pp. Crown 19 + 42 + 148; Price Rs. 12/-

In Sanskrit stanzas, 8 to 29 for each poet, the author of this work intends to present 'A Criticism of Sanskrit Poets'. The Sanskrit composition is accompanied by an introduction (Bhūmikā), translation and notes, all in Hindi. Dr. Pandey covers the literary range from Vālmīki and Vyāsa to Śrī Harṣa, the erudite poet of the late literary epic, introducing 15 poets of renown. His Sanskrit verse is lucid, often melodic, and he handles different metres with ease, although in a few cases the metrical rhythm appears to be disturbed. (See Aśvaghōṣa v. 10b, p. 28, Māgha, v. 3b, p. 34, Viśākhadatta, v. 5d, p. 34.) What he describes in Sanskrit verses are the general features of the poems and dramas, the commonly known distinctions and short-comings, with a touch of personal information about the poets and names of their works. It will be more apt to describe this composition as 'Sanskrit Kavi-varṇanā', rather than 'Samīkṣā', because there is no attempt at probing into the depth of the literary works. The Hindi translation and particularly the notes are